lights. Let the entire roof, and, as far as practicable, every part of it, be made to admit of a variety of adjustments or alterations: if there be too much light, it will be easy to modify it with sun-blinds where requisite. When these arrangements are ready, hang up a few large pictures to try the effect, and submit the experiment to a committee of artists, or other persons competent to form a correct judgment in such matters. If the first attempt should prove unsuccessful, try various other modes of lighting the apartment: it will be much better to spend a few hundreds, or even a thousand pounds, in experiments to ascertain the best mode of giving light to the pictures, than to finish the galleries at an immense expense, and, when they are completed, to find that the greater number of artists consider the pictures improperly lighted, and, consequently, that the building does not properly answer the purpose for which it has been especially erected. More useful information is likely to be derived from such experimental modes of procedure than from examining and comparing plans, sections, measurements, and descriptions procured of all the picture galleries in the civilised world.

With brick, tile, stone, slate, iron, glass, and various cements, the entire edifice may be constructed and finished, ready for the pictures, without an atom of what is usually termed inflammable matter in its composition.* Even the furniture and fittings might, to a very considerable extent, be manufactured with incombustible materials.

At the close of the paper the chairman, Mr. Mocatta, after expressing his opinion of the importance of the subject treated by Mr. Smith, especially with respect to the supposed injury occasioned to pictures by the London atmosphere, invited the artists present to favour the meeting with their sentiments on this point, in connection with the proposed change in the site of the National Gallery. If this were determined, it would not be difficult to provide for the reception of many more pictures than might be added for years to come to the national collection, and certainly there was plenty of available space for enlarging the existing building. The magnificence of the present site, and its central situation, would render it highly desirable to retain it if possible.

Mr. G. Foggo regretted to say that the last Parliamentary committee had rejected all the conclusions arrived at by previous committees, and recommended a change of site, without hearing any opinions to the contrary. The importance of having a National Gallery in the centre of the metropolis could not be overrated. He (Mr. Foggo) was a member of a deputation which had waited on Lord John Russell to solicit the removal of the cartoons from Hampton Court to the National Gallery. Until about twenty-two years ago, the keeper or deputy-keeper at Hampton Court was allowed a stove and coals to keep the cartoon gallery dry; and the fire, with the spray from the fountain in the court-yard, had produced more injury to these valuable works than they could possibly have sustained in London. He had strongly urged upon Lord John Russell the immense importance, in an educational point of view, of rendering the cartoons more accessible to the population of the metropolis, and his lordship rather warmly expressed a similar opinion. In fact, some of the cartoons had been brought to London for study at the Royal Academy and the British Institution, without especial injury. Mr. Smith, he believed, was perfectly right in stating, that the matter which settled on a properly varnished oil painting might easily be cleaned off without injury to the picture. It was well known to picture dealers, that when the re-paints and varnishes were taken from an old picture, it was often found "as hard as marble;" and pictures imported from the fine climate of Italy were never supposed to sustain injury from remaining ten years or more in the shops of the neighbourhood of the National Gallery. Indeed, if there were any truth in the idea, every nobleman and gentleman in London possessing fine pictures would at once send them away. The Duke of Northumberland's gallery was even in a worse situation than the national collection; and whilst the former was not supposed to have been at all injured, a picture by Hilton in the latter had suffered materially. Indeed, an entirely new picture, with the *magilp* which was now so freely used, would suffer more in the three months' exhibition of the Royal Academy than would a Raffaelle in a hundred years. All pictures, indeed, changed more in the first three months than in three years; and more in the first three years than in fifty years after. A faithful copy of an old picture, in like manner, would in a very few years be very much darker than the original; and if any part of a picture requiring it were repaired, the repaired portion soon became a dark spot. Some had said that the dust raised by the visitors to the gallery injured the pictures, but if that were so, they should not be exhibited at all; but in truth the grand object was that these great works should be seen and criticised by all classes of men, women, and children. Pictures were subject to atmospheric influences abroad, as in England, and the situation of the Louvre, especially in November or February, was much worse than that of our own National Gallery. The pictures there were very liable to be injured by the fog, which, though whiter than our own, often prevented the building being seen from the opposite quay; and there was more irregularity there in warming and ventilating than in London. The coal fires which darken the London fog maintain a greater degree of warmth and ventilation. In the dingy atmosphere of Holland the finest pictures of Van Eyck and others were preserved, even with the most beautiful glazings ever seen. More benefit would be done by offering premiums for good oils and varnishes than in building a new National Gallery. Admitting the darkening influence of the London atmosphere, Mr. Foggo contended that it was not confined to the centre of the metropolis. The sheep in Kensington Gardens and at Shepherd's Bush were as dark as in the heart of London.

Mr. Papworth, Fellow, adverted to the evidence of Mr. Faraday, to the effect that the national pictures were mainly damaged by the ammonia deposited upon them by the perspiration of the immense multitude of persons who visited them. Either Mr. Faraday was wrong in that conclusion, or another question arose; namely, whether such works were to be preserved unchanged as monuments of departed artists; or to be kept for the education and benefit of the people at large. In the latter case they should be allowed to do their work and perish, when they might be supplied by others.

Mr. E. T. Parris observed, that the supposed injury to pictures from the London atmosphere was rather to be ascribed to the mode in which they were originally painted. Besides the picture by Hilton to which Mr. Foggo had referred he (Mr. Parris) had observed that the painting by the same artist presented to the church at Newark, had cracked throughout in precisely the same way. Another picture by Hilton had actually run away,—having been described to him as actually "melting;" and the meeting would no doubt remember the painting of "Sabrina," by the same artist, in which the eye of the principal figure had fallen down upon the cheek, so that it was necessary to turn the picture upside down, in order that it might run back again. Reynolds, and other artists of his time, prepared their colours according to their own notions of chemistry; and, adopting the views of Vasari and others, they used boiled oil extensively, and with the worst effect. He (Mr. Parris) had recently restored some pictures at Norbury Park, Surrey, which, from being painted in the manner referred to, with a mixture of bitumen [pitch], had become perfectly black. The oil and bitumen being differently affected by heat and moisture, they could never coalesce. He was decidedly of opinion that the London atmosphere was not at all injurious to pictures.

Mr. Twining referred to the varying condition of the works of the old masters in this and other countries, as a proof that they were not deteriorated by atmospheric influences, but by some cause dependent on the manner in which they were painted. Even if the London atmosphere were injurious, no removal to a less distance than twenty miles could prevent the evil.

Mr. James Bell, M.P. Fellow, said that if the site of a New Gallery at Kensington had been actually secured, as had been stated, it would require the utmost vigilance on the part of the Institute to prevent the completion of the scheme. If, indeed, that plan were carried out, the cartoons at Hampton Court would be more accessible than the National Gallery. He would not call the proceeding referred to a job, though he could hardly describe it in other terms; and if Mr. Foggo had accurately characterized the proceedings of the last committee, the Institute would know what they might expect.

So far the proceedings of the Institute: and we will now glance through the evidence on the subject given to the Parliamentary Committee appointed in June 1850, to consider the present accommodation afforded by the National Gallery, and the best mode of preserving and exhibiting to the public the works of art belonging to the nation.

Mr. Uwins attributes the deterioration of the pictures to the dust and dirt of London, and advises the removal of the collection to Hyde-park, or some other place in the vicinity of London. "The smoke of London," he said, "certainly obscures and produces more dirt upon the pictures than is found in other cities: pictures do not preserve so well as they do on the continent, on account of the coal-smoke." According to Mr. Uwins's statement, the pictures are sponged and rubbed with a silk handkerchief every vacation.

Sir Charles Eastlake thinks the situation a bad one, and it is now much worse than formerly, because of the smoke from the engine which works the fountains, and from the Baths and Washhouses adjoining. He is not of opinion, however, that such dirt does really injure the pictures. Sir Charles also thinks that sufficient space might be found on the present site.——Dr. Waagen considers it is not possible to make such arrangements as to preserve the pictures properly in the atmosphere.

Mr. Faraday, the well-known chemist, thinks the atmosphere of London bad:—"The sulphurous vapours are in abundance in the atmosphere of London: they are everywhere present; and I have no doubt that even in this room they could be proved to be present by

* The pictures might be hung by means of a contrivance something like the mason's lewis; a number of cast-iron dove-tailed sockets, to receive the lewises, being inserted during the progress of the building, into various parts of the walls, where the pictures should be suspended, from which iron rods or bars would pass through the rings from one lewis to another, and from these rods small chains might be attached to the picture frames wherever requisite. If the lewises, or iron rods, should be occasionally in the way, and interfere with the arrangement of the pictures, the lewis might be taken out of the socket, leaving the wall free from any projecting object, and it might be re-inserted, at a moment's notice, whenever required by changes made in the arrangement of the pictures.

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